

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SANTIAGO 05808 242309Z

70

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 IO-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 SR-02 ORM-03 SCA-01 DRC-01 /117 W

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FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 414

INFO USMISSION GENEVA

US MISSION USUN NEW YORK 905

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTIAGO 5808

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CI, PINS, PINT

SUBJECT: RELEASE OF DETAINEES

REF: SANTIAGO 5748

1. SUMMARY: MINISTRY INTERIOR STATEMENT SEPT 23 DENIED PRESS SPECULATION OF IMPENDING "MASSIVE RELEASE" OF CHILEAN DETAINEES, NOTING EACH DETAINEE WILL BE RELEASED ONLY AFTER CAREFUL INVESTIGATION

TO INSURE HE WILL NOT BECOME A THREAT TO INTERNAL SECURITY IN CHILE. EXEC SEC OF CHILEAN COMMITTEE FOR REFUGEES SAMUEL NALEGACH IS QUOTED TO EFFECT THAT GOC WILL RELEASE "MAJORITY" OF DETAINEES. HE USED FIGURE OF 2,000 PERSONS (CONSIDERABLY LESS THAN HALF OF TOTAL NUMBER OF PERSONS WE BELIEVE UNDER DETENTION), OF WHOM 1500 WOULD REMAIN IN CHILE AND 500 WOULD BE EXILED. PINOCHET, MEANWHILE, ISSUED ANOTHER PROPAGANDA BLAST AT "GUILTY SILENCE" OF CUBA/SOVIET UNION ON PRISONER RELEASE QUESTION. END SUMMARY.

2. MINISTRY OF INTERIOR ISSUED STATEMENT SEPT 23 REFERRING TO PRESS REPORTS OF IMMINENT RELEASE OF 270 CHILEAN DETAINEES (REFTEL). STATEMENT NOTED THAT GOC HAS ALWAYS SOUGHT RAPID INVESTIGATION OF BACKGROUND OF ALL DETAINEES; THAT PERSONS DETERMINED ON BASIS OF THIS INVESTIGATION NOT TO CONSTITUTE A THREAT TO PUBLIC
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PAGE 02 SANTIAGO 05808 242309Z

SAFETY HAVE BEEN RELEASED "ALMOST DAILY"; THAT IN RESPONSE TO

CHIEF OF STATE GENERAL PINOCHET STATEMENT SEPT 11 ON RELEASE OF DETAINEES "AN EXHAUSTIVE AND ACCELERATED INVESTIGATION OF ALL DETAINEES IS PRESENTLY UNDERWAY"; THAT EACH CASE REQUIRES "COMPLETE AND EXTENSIVE STUDY" HOWEVER, TO VERIFY THAT PERSONS IF RELEASED, WILL NOT CONSTITUTE SECURITY DANGER TO REST OF POPULATION; AND THAT CONSEQUENTLY THERE WILL BE NO "MASSIVE RELEASES" OF DETAINEES AS REPORTED BY PRESS. STATEMENT CONCLUDED WITH SHARP REMINDER THAT ONLY MINISTRY OF INTERIOR WILL DETERMINE WHO WILL BE RELEASED AND UNDER WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES.

3. PROTESTANT PASTOR SAMUEL NALEGACH, EXEC SEC OF CHILEAN COMMITTEE FOR REFUGEES, IS QUOTED IN AP INTERVIEW AS STATING GOC PLANS TO RELEASE "MAJORITY" OF DETAINEES EXCEPT FOR "THE BIG FISH" OF ALLENDE ERA -- APPARENT REFERENCE TO "DAWSON ISLAND" GROUP. NALEGACH USED FIGURE OF 2,000 PERSONS WHO WILL BE FREED, OF WHOM 1500 WILL REMAIN IN CHILE AND 500 WILL BE EXILED. HE CLAIMED FIRST GROUP OF 40 PERSONS IS NOW READY TO LEAVE FOR ARGENTINA, BUT NOTED PRINCIPAL PROBLEM FACING AGENCIES INVOLVED IN RELEASE OF CHILEAN DETAINEES IS FINDING RECEIVING COUNTRIES FOR THOSE WHO WILL BE EXILED.

4. GENERAL PINOCHET, MEANWHILE, VIA JUNTA SPOKESMAN WILLOUGHBY, ISSUED PUBLIC BLAST AT "GUILTY SILENCE" OF SOVIET UNION AND CUBA IN FACE OF CHILEAN CHALLENGE TO THEM TO RELEASE THEIR OWN POLITICAL PRISONERS. PINOCHET NOTED DAILY RECEIPT OF "HUNDREDS" OF MESSAGES FROM FAMILY MEMBERS OF THESE PRISONERS, AND IMPLIED GOC WOULD PRESENT THEM TO WORLD IN SUCH FORUMS AS UN AND OAS AS "PROOF" OF HYPOCRISY OF THESE REGIMES ON HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS.

5. COMMENT: THERE ARE CONSIDERABLY MORE THAN 2,000 PERSONS UNDER DETENTION IN CHILE, PERHAPS UP TO 6,000 OR EVEN MORE. NALEGACH'S COMMENT ON DIFFICULTY OF PLACING EXILES CONFIRMS OTHER INFORMATION WE HAVE HEARD FROM ADMIRAL MERINO AND EUROPEAN DIPLOMATIC SOURCES HERE (REFTEL).

6. MINISTRY OF INTERIOR STATEMENT MAY BE INTENDED TO REASSURE STRONG SUPPORTERS OF REGIME THAT RELEASES WILL NOT BE SUCH AS TO INCREASE INTERNAL SECURITY RISKS, AND ALSO TO UNDERCUT SERIES OF UNOFFICIAL NEWS STORIES ON THIS SUBJECT.
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PAGE 03 SANTIAGO 05808 242309Z

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